

The Virginia Master Naturalist Program is jointly sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Virginia Museum of Natural History.



Virginia Master Naturalist



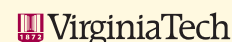

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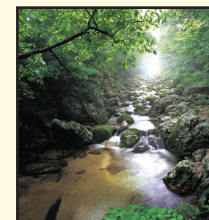
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Volunteer
educators,
citizen scientists,
and stewards
helping
Virginians
conserve and
manage natural
resources and
public lands



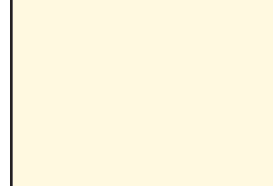
www.virginiamasternaturalist.org



The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Interested Virginians become Master Naturalists through training and volunteer service.






The process for becoming a certified Virginia Master Naturalist typically takes six to 12 months. One starts by completing a 40-hour basic training course offered by a local chapter of the program. An additional 8 hours of advanced training are also required. An important part of the certification process is the required 40 hours of volunteer service.

Chapters are in development across Virginia. The Virginia Master Naturalist website at www.virginiamasternaturalist.org lists existing chapters. In an area where there is no existing chapter, several interested people and an advisor from a sponsoring agency can start their own.






People who are curious about nature, enjoy the outdoors, and want to be a part of natural resource management and conservation in Virginia are perfect candidates to become Virginia Master Naturalists.

The basic training course covers the background knowledge and skills that every naturalist needs to have. Topics include:

-  Virginia biogeography
-  Core biology topics such as ornithology (the study of birds) and botany (the study of plants)
-  Management and conservation of ecological systems such as forests and wetlands
-  Teaching and interpretive skills
-  Citizen science and research skills

Each chapter tailors the course to fit its local geography and local environmental issues, so no two courses are exactly the same.

Each certified Virginia Master Naturalist is required to perform 40 hours of community service. These projects can be as diverse as the Master Naturalists themselves:

-  People who enjoy teaching, public speaking, or working with youth may do education-related service projects, such as leading programs in a nearby state park.
-  People who enjoy studying nature and science may volunteer as citizen scientists, helping to collect data on wildlife populations or water quality.
-  People who like being out in nature, getting dirty, and seeing tangible results of physical labor may help build and maintain park trails, restore wildlife habitat, or perform other stewardship-related projects.